



RESPONSE TO 1994 OSHPD OUTCOME STUDY

The Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development's (OSHPD) efforts to provide comparative information regarding the quality of care given by California hospitals is to be commended. Outcome information is valuable to both consumers and purchasers of health care in order to make informed decisions regarding their choice of hospitals. Hoag Hospital's outcome rates are equal to or better than expected in all categories and better than the statewide outcome rates.

OSHPD has made considerable efforts to increase the validity of their study methodology over the past two years. The selection and weighting of risk factors has been enhanced to more accurately predict patient outcome.

In future studies, the following should be evaluated and seriously considered:

- Complications should be weighted in order to differentiate between significant and minor adverse outcomes;
- OSHPD needs to continue to validate hospital coding practices to reduce the variability which can bias results (i.e. some pre-existing conditions continue to be inappropriately identified as post-operative complications due to the limitations of ICD-9 coding);
- Differentiating hospital results with a box versus a box with a check is not statistically significant and may mislead the public. The occurrence of one adverse outcome separates these two categories and the complications are not reported with respect to the number of procedures performed.
- Volume indicators by procedure should be included to assist in the interpretation of the results.